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Discharge ceremony of the disqualified Maoist army underway



Nepali leaders and UN officials at the function to mark the beginning of the discharge of disqualified Maoist army in Sindhuli. Photo: UN

Kathmandu, 31 Jan: Every part of the UNDP Country Office has come together for the discharge of the disqualified Maoist army since it began on 7 Jan 2010. The programme and project teams moved fast to implement a plan they have been working on for a very long time. Everyone took this in their stride. And things hinged on the Operations team coming together as short notice procurement of a full camp set up – from tents to showers to rope-offs, the recruitment of a large number of people (more than 40) in the last few weeks, the hiring of a dozen buses, trucks and jeeps. The process is highly ordered and disciplined. One cannot distinguish the 40 UNDP team members from the 30+ UNICEF, UNFPA, OHCHR and UNMIN staff members either. It is one absolutely seamless UN team working together. A very important task for UN coherence as well as for the UNDP operation.

There are altogether seven ceremonies each one of which presenting its own challenges. The discharge, which is scheduled to be complete in seven cantonments across the country by mid February 2010 is part of the 612 Action Plan signed on 16 December 2009 by the Government of Nepal, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist and

the United Nations. The discharged Individuals will be access to a range of rehabilitation options which have been developed by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP, in consultation with Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction and UCPN-M. Four packages are offered—formal education, up to Grade 12 (UNICEF); vocational training and support for small business development (UNDP); and health related training (UNFPA).



Registration and information collection of the discharged in Sindhuli Cantonment. Photo: UN



Statement by Robert Piper, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Nepal on the first discharge ceremony at Maoist Cantonment Site 4-Nawalparasi

Distinguished visitors, men and women of MCS4.

To the discharged, I say to you - Your country needs you, now more than ever. The peace process has been starved of good news for longer than Nepal can afford. In the way you conduct yourselves today, next week, next month, you have the ability to foster momentum. To restore hope that the peace process is moving forward.

Some of you are angry after two years of uncertainty. We understand why you could feel this way. We have been working for two years to bring this day forward. No one can return those two years to you, but we will do everything we can, to help make this day of discharge a new beginning for you as individuals. One that opens a new chapter, full of promise and of hope.

Nepal needs teachers. Skilled medical personnel. Entrepreneurs that will grow their business and employ others. She needs mechanics, masons, plumbers, electricians. The New Nepal needs to be built physically, as well as politically and socially. And there isn't a moment to lose.

We know that many of you carry a strong sense of social activism and responsibility. We respect this. Nepal needs its agents of social change. We ask only – indeed we insist - that this be exercised through peaceful means. Out of uniform. Away from cantonments. Away from camps of any kind.

You have been briefed on your rehabilitation options. Your ID card is a ticket to new pathways or to catch up on lost time. It is valid for one year from today's date. For those ready to return to school, financial support is

available for both the student and the hosting school. For the budding entrepreneur, business training and start up equipment is available. For those looking for a job, a range of vocational training programmes are waiting. For those interested in working in the health field, a number of training options have been prepared. While you study or train, you will receive financial support. Study the pamphlet you have been given. On your ID card is the toll free number to call, to find out more. We want to hear from you. Upon contacting us, we will provide information and guidance on how you can access this training and education for your future.

We also want to hear from your disqualified friends and colleagues who are not here today. Encourage them to call as well to find out how they too can become part of the programme.

To the Maoist army, I acknowledge the good cooperation we have enjoyed here at the Nawalparasi Division. Let it continue for the next ceremonies over the coming days. We believe you want what is best for these individuals. You have committed in word and today, in deed, to their formal discharge to civilian life. Let the year ahead unambiguously demonstrate this commitment. Let us give the United Nations Security Council the assurance it needs that this legacy has been properly addressed.

Good luck to all of you.



UN staff taking picture for new ID of a discharged combatant. Photo: UN

UNIC marks Holocaust Day



Participating students from different colleges. Photo: UNIC

Kathmandu, 22 Jan: UN Information Centre (UNIC) marked the 2010 International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust on 22 January. The event consisted of a one day long Inter-college round-table discussion consisting of some 30 students from 12 various reputed colleges on the theme “Social harmony in Nepal”.

On the occasion, the Footprints DVD was screened. This educational video centres around one of the most painful graphic images from the Holocaust, the shoes of the victims who perished in Nazi death camps.

The participants were very eloquent speakers who belonged to an inter college networking called “Young

Debaters of Nepal”.

This was followed by screening of the feature film “Defiance” which was open to all UN staff/general public and media persons. The movie was about Jewish partisans battling the Nazis in Belarus, starring Daniel Craig and Liev Schreiber. It is based on a true story that was detailed in a book by Holocaust scholar Nechama Tec. Director Edward Zwick succeeds in combining epic scope with intimate detail. Defiance brings to life the struggle of this group of brave Jews who fought against overwhelming odds, providing a sharp contrast to the countless World War II movies portraying Jews as helpless victims.



Students getting information about Holocaust victim through audio visual material. Photo: UNIC



Screening of the feature film “Defiance”. Photo: UNIC

UNESCO welcomes decision to better protect birthplace of Lord Buddha in Lumbini, Nepal



Lumbini World Heritage Site and birth place of lord Buddha, Nepal. Photo: UNESCO

Kathmandu, 26 Jan: The UNESCO Office in Kathmandu welcomes the recent decision of the Industrial Promotion Board of the Ministry of Industry to limit industrial activities in and around the Lumbini World Heritage Site as an important step in the efforts to protect and preserve the birthplace of Lord Buddha. The decision taken by the Board will help to restrict industrial activities in the area on several levels:

- An area of 15 km from the Northern, Eastern and Western boundaries of the present project area as designated in the Kenzo Tange Master Plan, within which the Lumbini World Heritage Property lies, and South up to the Indian border and 800 meter in both sides of the road along the Lumbini-Bhairahawa Corridor will be off-limits for the establishment of new Industries except for those which are not carbon emitting.
- Industries already existing within this area can operate only if they respect the Environment Protection Act. Industries which do not respect the Act will be further discussed in order to relocate them within two years. Provision will be made to avoid further increase of capital, capacity and objectives of those industries and to prevent them from exceeding their present level of electricity consumption.
- A representative of the Lumbini Development Trust will be included in the Initial Environmental Examination / Environment Impact Assessment (IEE/EIA) Committee whenever IEE/EIA is requested to authorize the establishment of small and cottage enterprises in the Lumbini area and new industrial development along the Bhairahawa-Lumbini roads up to the Airport junction as well as further increase of capital, capacity, objectives and electricity consumption by

existing industries.

- Industries already registered but at present not operating within the 15 km area need to take pollution control measures as per the Environment Protection Act before operating and those which do not meet the requirements will be relocated in other parts within a given time frame. Lumbini was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997 in recognition of the site bearing a "unique testimony" of Lumbini as the birthplace of Lord Buddha and because it is "tangibly associated with the events, living traditions and

beliefs" linked to the founder of one of the most important world religions. Unrestrained industrial development has presented one of the greatest threats to the archaeological sites scattered across the area between Tilaurakot and Ramagram in recent years. It not only impacts on the serenity of the sacred landscape but also endangers the site's many ancient archaeological vestiges. It is therefore important to establish an appropriate land use plan to guide any future infrastructural and industrial development within this historic Buddhist region.

UNESCO observes that the decision of Industrial Promotion Board would have been even more powerful if it would have provided restrictions on the operation of all industries, not only those that are carbon emitting, goes in the right direction. The announcement reaffirms the Nepal Government's determination to support the on-going preparation of Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the Lumbini World Heritage Property and the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu remains committed to working in close cooperation with the Government and Lumbini authorities to further assist Nepal in the preservation of the unique site.

Disaster preparedness - Minimum Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crises



Participants of a training on Minimum Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crises. Photo: UNFPA

Kathmandu, 31 Jan: Three day training on Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crises took place from 17-19 January 2010 in Nepalgunj. The training was part of emergency reproductive health outreach project implemented by ADRA Nepal with financial support from ECHO through UNFPA. Among the participants from Mugu, Salyan and Bajhang districts were local government health officers, medical staff from district hospitals and NGOs. The participants will conduct further trainings in their respective districts for local line agencies and NGOs.

The Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) is a set of priority activities to be implemented during the early stages of an emergency. In 2010 UNFPA is planning to work closely

with Epidemiology Disease Control Department (EDCD), Family Health Division (FHD) and Emergency Health and Nutrition Working Group to scale up the MISP training. UNFPA will also support reactivation of the Reproductive Health (RH) Sub Cluster to strengthen coordination for the delivery of RH services in emergencies.



UN Events Calendar for February

International Mother Language Day

<http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/language>

International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by UNESCO's General Conference in

November 1999. The International Day has been observed every year since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. All moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

“Partnership for Safe Water” Programme in Lalitpur: Four Communities declared "Safe Water Zone"



Point of Use Exhibition. Photo: UN-HABITAT

Kathmandu, 31 Jan: The "Partnership for Safe Water" programme – a demonstration of public private partnership approach among Government of Nepal, UN HABITAT Water for Asian Cities Programme Nepal and Bottlers Nepal Private Limited accomplished its project in Lalitpur successfully by raising public awareness on safe drinking water and promoting Point of Use (PoU) drinking water options effectively in urban and peri-urban communities of the city.

Lalitpur Sub-metropolitan City (LSMC), the nearest city of the capital of Nepal- Kathmandu, is one of the developed cities of Nepal, where majority of denizens have more or less access to most of the basic services. But, people are still deprived from basic water and sanitation services.

There are many water sources such as city supply, stone spouts, dug wells and others, but water from these sources are neither sufficient to meet the demand of growing population nor safe to drink. By virtue of it, incidences of cholera and other diarrheal diseases appear every year with commence of monsoon in Lalitpur.

Considering it, LSMC, Environment and Public Health Organization (ENPHO) and Urban Environment Management Society (UEMS) jointly launched a project in selected poor urban and peri-urban cluster of the city to promote Point of Use (PoU) drinking water, and increase access of urban poor to safe drinking water.

It conducted various awareness raising activities, and promoted household water treatment options including boiling, chlorination, filtration and Solar Water Disinfection Techniques (SODIS) widely to bring behavioral change in city dwellers and materialize the vision that the project had made at the time of its beginning in Lalitpur.

The stakeholder consultation meetings were held to discuss about the implementation of programme

activities. It organized trainings and produced more than 80 community trainers to orient people about the importance of safe drinking water as well as to promote PoU options. It also organized about 70 community orientation programmes on safe drinking water and PoU Options following these

training.

In addition, students and teachers were sensitized on the importance of safe drinking water, introduced them to PoU options, and increased knowledge on health and hygiene by organizing educational events on water, health and hygiene at 25 different schools of Lalitpur. Household water treatment options were also installed at 11 schools in the area. The colloidal silver filters were provided to 22 health clinics in Lalitpur.

Likewise, information on safe drinking water and PoU options were disseminated through FM radios and by performing street dramas, too. These efforts have finally contributed to achieve the targets that the programme had envisioned. Four communities in Lalitpur (Chochehen, Chhusika, Lohanla and Kwenani of Lalitpur) have already declared their communities as "Safe Water Zone." People in these communities were using untreated and unsafe drinking water due to the lack of awareness; and cholera and diarrheal diseases were considered as common phenomena.

After intervention of the project activities, they realized the importance of safe drinking water. None of the households in these communities drinks untreated and unsafe water in these days. Every household uses PoU options at their home to disinfect drinking water. It has reduced incidences of waterborne diseases in their communities.

The initiatives undertaken by these communities have become a good example for others community people as well. It has increased the use of PoU options in other communities of Lalitpur. Many other communities are also practicing the water treatment options so that they could also declare their communities as safe water zone. It has also helped to decrease incidences of waterborne diseases in the municipal area in the year 2009.